



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, February 10, 2009

**Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona**

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**TUCSON MAN SENTENCED TO 97-MONTHS IN PRISON FOR
FRAUDULENT IDENTIFICATION OFFENSES AND OTHER CHARGES**

TUCSON, Ariz. – Jemara Akil Butler, 29, of Tucson, was sentenced yesterday to 97 months in federal prison by U.S. District Judge Cindy K. Jorgenson. Butler was found guilty on April 10, 2008, after a 6-day jury trial, of one count of conspiracy to commit offenses against the United States, nine counts of production of false and fraudulent identification documents, one count of possession with intent to use unlawfully five or more false and fraudulent identification documents and 30 counts of wire fraud. Butler was also ordered to make restitution of \$72, 858.47 to the victims of these offenses during his five year term of supervised release.

The criminal offenses stemmed from a fraudulent lottery scheme. Individuals throughout the U.S. were sent correspondence informing them that they had won a lottery. While the amount of the "lottery winnings" varied among the individuals, the "winnings" were always represented to be several hundred thousand dollars. In most instances, a check for several thousand dollars was included with the lottery correspondence. The correspondence advised the lottery winners that they were to deposit the enclosed check and wire transfer a portion of the funds back to the sender to cover "fees" or "insurance" associated with their "lottery winnings." The correspondence provided a telephone number for the lottery winners to call to find out where and to whom they should wire the funds. When the lottery winners called the number indicated in the correspondence, they were provided with the name of the individual to whom to wire the funds and the location where the funds should be wired.

This case involved approximately 27 purported "lottery winners." According to the instructions in the lottery correspondence, the "lottery winners" called the number noted in the lottery correspondence and were instructed to wire funds to Butler or one of his co-conspirators. The "lottery winners" then sent wire transfers of monies via Western Union or Money Gram to Butler or his co-conspirators. The "lottery winners" were never provided with any of the "lottery winnings" represented in the lottery correspondence. Moreover, the "lottery winners" were unable to cash or deposit the checks sent with the lottery correspondence because the checks were fraudulent.

The evidence during the trial showed that June 2005 and July 2006, Butler and his co-conspirators picked-up numerous wire transfers of monies from the "lottery winners" at Western Union and Money Gram centers around Tucson and in Washington State. For some of the wire transfer pick-ups, Butler and his co-conspirators used their own validly issued driver's licenses or identification cards. However, for many of the pick-ups, they used fraudulent Canadian driver's licenses. After receiving the wired funds, they retained a portion and wire transferred the remaining money to Canada.

Butler was sentenced to five years in federal prison on the conspiracy charge and 97 months in prison on the each of the remaining counts, which were ordered to run concurrently. The investigation in this case was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The prosecution was handled by Eric Markovich, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-06-00811-TUC-CKJ
RELEASE NUMBER: 2009-036(Butler)

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